



CITY OF SAINT PAUL
Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

COMMERCE BUILDING
8 Fourth St. E, Suite 200
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-1024

Telephone: 651-266-9090
Facsimile: 651-266-9124
Web: www.stpaul.gov

Department of Safety and Inspection

Frequently Asked Questions for RNC Convention Period

LIQUOR SERVICE

Do I need a license if I want to sponsor an event and be able to serve liquor?

If you are not currently license as an on-sale liquor (bar/restaurant) establishment and wish to sell alcoholic beverages to persons at your event, you will need to hire a Minnesota State License Liquor Caterer, [MN Stat. 340A.404, subdivision 12](#). That liquor caterer would need to apply to the City of Saint Paul for a temporary liquor license for your location. [St Paul Leg. Code 409.01](#).

Do I need a license if I want to have a private party and wish to serve alcoholic drinks?

A license to serve liquor at a private party is not required. A private party is an event for invited guest only and you may not charge for the drinks either directly or indirectly (e.g. a cover charge).

If I hold a restaurant license in the City of Saint Paul but do not have a liquor license, can I host an event and serve liquor?

Any person holding a City restaurant license, that does not also hold a license to sell liquor may request permission from the Department of Safety and Inspections to hire a liquor caterer for a [private event](#) at which, a liquor caterer licensed to provide alcohol in the City of St. Paul may sell or serve liquor at the non-liquor licensed location.

OUTDOOR SALES

Do I need a license to sell merchandise on the street?

You will need a [Peddlers](#) license to sell merchandise on the street or sidewalk (public way). Your retail operation must remain mobile (e.g. conduct the sale and move on). Setting up a temporary stand on the public sidewalk or street/alley is not permitted. If you are anticipating food sales that requires a separate food license [see [mobile food vehicle and food carts](#)]

Can I sell merchandise or food in the skyways or in the tunnel to the RiverCenter?

No sales of food or merchandise are allowed in the City's skyways or in the pedestrian tunnel to the River Center.

TENTS, CANOPIES AND OTHER STRUCTURES

Do I need a permit for tent or canopy?

A permit from the St. Paul Fire Marshal's office is required for tents greater than 200 square feet; for canopies greater than 400 square feet; or combinations of tents and/or canopies with an aggregate square footage exceeding 700 square feet. Tent and canopy fabrics must be documented flame retardant. Combustible decorations, such as hay, straw, wood chips or similar materials may not be placed in the tent or under the canopy. Tents and canopies must also meet applicable life safety codes for maximum occupant loads and exiting. Contact the Department of Safety and Inspections Fire Inspections Division, for further details.

Do I need a permit to install temporary stage and bleachers for an event I am planning?

In most cases, you will need to obtain a permit to construct or install a stage or bleacher. The need for a permit is determined by such items as, size of the structure, height above the ground and the specific intended use. Call our Plan Review Section of the Dept. of Safety and Inspections at 651-266-9007.

HEATING, ELECTRICAL AND OTHER MECHANICAL SERVICES

Do I need a permit to install a propane tank?

The placement and use of portable liquid petroleum gas (LPG) tanks of 100lbs. or larger (either as single unit or aggregate quantity) requires a permit from the Fire Inspection Division of the Department of Safety and Inspections. Temporary LPG tanks, 100lbs. or larger, must be set and connected by a qualified contractor. Contact the Department of Safety and Inspections Fire Inspections Division, for further details.

Can I install my own temporary electrical connections?

You will need to hire a Minnesota State licensed and bonded electrical contractor to install electrical connection from all permanent or portable power supplies. The electrical contractor will need to obtain a [permit](#) from the Department of Safety and Inspection and have the installation inspected by our electrical inspectors. All electrical work must be done to the standards of the latest edition of the National Electrical Code (NEC). Any inspections that must be performed outside of regular working hours M-F will incur an additional cost for the inspection.

What approvals do I need if I want to conduct a fire works show?

The public display of aerial fireworks, flame devices, pyrotechnic special effects and pyrotechnics require a permit issued by the Fire Inspection Division of the Department of Safety & Inspections. Permits are issued only to Minnesota State Licensed Pyrotechnicians.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Do I need a Saint Paul license to sell food items from a cart or vehicle?

Yes. All [mobile food vehicles and food carts](#) operated in the City of Saint Paul must be inspected and licensed by the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI), even if the vehicle or cart is currently licensed by another municipality, county or the State of Minnesota. Food carts must comply with National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) standard 59 and have an NSF seal on them or must be approved by environmental health.

If your cart or vehicle is not mobile (e.g. conduct food sale and move on), then you will need to obtain a permit from the St Paul Public Works Right of Way Section to locate your cart or vehicle on any public street, alley or sidewalk. Contact Public Works at 651-266-6151 for information concerning cost of the permit, restriction on use of the right of way and insurance requirements.

There are restrictions if you plan to set up in or be located near a city park or parkway. You will need to contact the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Dept. at 651-266-6408, regarding these regulations and what approvals you will need.

Can I store and clean my food cart at home?

No. All licensed **food carts** require a Commissary. The Commissary **CANNOT** be in a private residence.

Are there any special requirements to sell food from a vehicle or trailer?

Self-contained trucks, trailers, or other vehicles must have the appropriate sinks, cooking equipment, and hot and cold holding equipment to safely serve the foods you will be serving. All equipment must comply with National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) standards and be adequate and appropriate for its intended use.

CATERING

What is catering?

A business that is providing, preparing, and/or serving food to persons or groups where all food and service expenses are paid by a single person or group is a caterer. The sale of food to individuals is not catering and is prohibited. The preparation and delivery of box lunches from a licensed restaurant does not require a separate catering license. Information regarding catering licenses, applications and fees can be found on our website in our [Catering section](#).

I am licensed as a caterer in another municipality and have been asked to provide food for a business meeting in Saint Paul. Do I need a Saint Paul license to serve the food?

No. Another City's Catering License is acceptable in lieu of a City of Saint Paul Catering License. You will need to show proof of another City's Catering License by providing a copy of your current license. No fee is required.

I operate a restaurant in another Minnesota Municipality and have been asked by a company to provide the lunch for a business meeting in Saint Paul, is a Saint Paul license required?

If you are not licensed for catering, a [Saint Paul Catering license](#) would be required.

I am a licensed caterer and have been asked to sell food at an event in Saint Paul. Do I need a Saint Paul license?

Yes. Selling food items directly to individuals is not catering. A [special event food license](#) would be required.

SOUND LEVEL VARIANCE APPLICATIONS

Do I need to apply for a sound level variance?

It is not strictly required, however a variance should be applied for if any amplified music, equipment or other source of noise is, or is likely to, exceed the permitted sound level thresholds listed in [Chapter 293 of the Saint Paul Legislative Code](#).

How do I apply for a sound level variance?

Obtain and complete a [Sound Level Variance application](#) by calling the Department of Safety and Inspections (DSI) at 651-266-9090 or visit our website for the form.

How long does it take to process a sound level variance application?

We need about 30 days or more notice prior to the event to process the application.

What happens during the application process?

Once the completed application form and fee (\$150) is submitted to the Department of Safety and Inspection (DSI), a public hearing before the St. Paul City Council will be scheduled and all residences within a given radius of the noise source will be notified of the event and the public hearing. After a public hearing, the council may by resolution grant, deny or modify the variance request.

Do I need to attend the public hearing?

Attendance is not required, however should Council members have any questions or concerns regarding your event, it would be to your benefit to be able to address them.

When and where are the public hearings?

Public hearings before the City Council are held approximately every other Wednesday, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 3rd floor at City Hall.

What about broadcasting from a vehicle?

A license is required for any [vehicle broadcasting](#) from a speaker or microphone. A broadcasting vehicle which is used in a bona fide parade for which a permit has been granted under section 152.18(b) of the Saint Paul Legislative Code by the chief of police is exempt. License information is available on our [Department of Safety and Inspections](#) website.

USE OF PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

I want to operate on a street or sidewalk within the public right of way, what permits are required?

Use of the Public Right of Way is granted under either a Special Event Permit issued by the Saint Paul Police Department (Community Services) 651-558-2350 and/or an Obstruction Permit from Public Works Right-of-Way Section (651-266-6151).

There are many types of Obstruction Permits required by the City of Saint Paul for uses such as:

- Use of Street
- Sidewalk/Boulevard Use
- Alley Use
- Parking Meter Hooding

Obstruction Permits are issued under authority of [Ch. 116 Right-of-Way Administration](#) and [Ch. 135 Right-of- Way Permits](#) of City Legislative Code.

Policies for issuing Obstruction Permits within the Public Right of Way during the Republican National Convention are being developed Check back later for further information.

SIGNS

Is a permit needed for a temporary sign?

Yes, including banners, flags, pennants and valances mounted to the face of a building; banners crossing the street; portable signs; electronic message signs and banners attached to awnings, tents, skyways and light poles. Except for noncommercial banners crossing a street or attached to a skyway or light pole, temporary signs cannot be located on a public sidewalk, boulevard or street. Cloth and banner signs cannot exceed 120 square feet; portable and wall signs cannot exceed 32 square feet. Visit our webpage on [temporary sign permits](#) for more information.

A permit is not required for election signs (with a maximum size of 16 square feet), signs inside of windows, signs less than 6 square feet in size attached to a building, signs carried and signs displayed on vehicles.

Signs advertising businesses not located on the premises are prohibited.

All temporary signs must be removed after the Convention.

Signs of any size or type mounted on or attached to historically designated structures need approval from the Heritage Preservation Commission. Visit the [Heritage Preservation](#) webpage for more information.